(c) IIT, Kharagpur has submitted a detailed report suggesting product diversification into six new products mainly relating to XLPE Power Cable, FRLS Cable, Broadband Equipment, Renewable Energy Equipment and Optical Fibre Cable as there is expected to be limited demand for Jelly Filled Cables currently being produced by HCL, in the future.

(d) Not applicable.

Black Marketing of LPG

3049. SHRI MAHENDRA MOHAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Government is aware that black-marketing of subsidized LPG cylinders is going on unabated in Delhi and rest of the country;

(b) whether Government is also aware that black-marketeers are procuring these cylinders from the godowns of oil companies only;

(c) if so, whether Government makes on the spot survey of these depots;

(d) whether Government is also aware that subsidized LPG is also finding place in hotels and other business establishments at the cost of consumers; and

(e) if so, what Government has done to check and reduce the shortage?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE MINISTRY OF PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS (SHRI DINSHA J. PATEL) (a) to (e): The possibility of blackmarketing of subsidized domestic LPG cylinders by some unscrupulous elements cannot be ruled out due to the wide gap between the retail price of LPG for domestic use and the market price for commercial LPG.

In order to stop blackmarketing/diversion of domestic LPG cylinders, the Government has enacted "Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000"and formulated "Marketing Discipline Guidelines, 2001" which provides for penal action against LPG distributors indulging in diversion/blackmarketing of LPG.

Whenever OMCs receive complaints, these are investigated and if the complaint is established, suitable action is taken against the LPG distributor(s) in accordance with the provisions of the Marketing Discipline Guidelines (MDG). MDG provides for following action against the distributor:—

- Fine of Rs. 20,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 1st offence.
- Fine of Rs. 50,000 plus the price of LPG diverted at commercial rates for 2nd offence.
- Termination of the distributorship for 3rd offence.

In addition to the action taken by the OMCs, State Govenments are empowered under the LPG (Regulation of Supply & Distribution) Order, 2000 promulgated under the Essential Commodities Act, 1955 to taken action against blackmarketing /diversion of domestic LPG. Similarly, the Weights and Measures Departments of the States/UTs initiate initiate legal action against those LPG distributors diverting LPG cylinders. The State Governments have been alerted from time to time to take steps against the blackmarketing/diversion of domestic cylinders for unauthorized usage.

Government have issued advertisements cautioning the public that use of domestic LPG for non-domestic purposes is illegal, dangerous and against national interest. Through these advertisements, cooperation of the general public has also been sought to report any irregularity/malpractice to the OMCs.

The officials of OMCs carry out random checks at distributors godowns, delivery points, as well as en-route to ensure that no misuse takes place. The distributors of OMCs are under strict instructions to check the weight of cylinders at their godowns before delivery, and only cylinders with the specified weight are to be delivered to the customers. The distributors have also been instructed to ensure that the seals are verified & shown to the customers at the time of delivery. In case any under-weight cylinder is received by the customer, such cylinders are replaced free of charge by the OMCs.

Public Sector Oil Marketing Companies (OMCs) have reported that at present, there is no overall shortage of LPG in the country and LPG supplies to distributors are being made by the OMCs through indigenous production and imports in accordance with the genuine demand of customers registered with the LPG distributors.

However, OMCs had reported backlog in LPG supplies in certain States in the country, due to a combination of factors *viz.*, reduction in supply of bulk LPG compared to the target by Reliance Industries Limited (RIL) & Essar Oil Limited in January-February, 2008, delay in movement of bulk LPG by rail from Jamnagar to the Northern Region, increased demand in the States due to severe cold which resulted in panic booking by the customers, strikes by contract labour, agitational activities, delays in berthing of vessels at Haldia Port due to reduced draft, bandhs etc.

Government had advised OMCs to liquidate the backlog in the country by operating the bottling plants on holidays and during extended hours. Increased bottling is also done during the working days for early clearance of backlog.

At present, OMCs have not reported any backlog in supply of LPG in the country. OMCs are monitoring the situation on a day-to-day basis and corrective action is being taken wherever required.

Supply of Gas to NTPC

3050. SHRI A. VIJAYARAGHAVAN: Will the Minister of PETROLEUM AND NATURAL GAS be pleased to state:

(a) whether Gas Authority of India (GAIL) have a long-term agreement with NTPC for the supply of gas under Administered Pricing Mechanism (APM) category to gas based power plants;

(b) if so, the details including average APM gas supplied to NTPC for last two years for the power plants;

(c) if so, whether six gas-based power plants are lying under utilized due to shortage of natural gas;

(d) if so, the loss of power generation at NTPC due to shortage of APM gas for last two years, year-wise, power gas plant-wise; and

(e) the steps taken to rectify the same?